

## Athenian News :

O R,

## Dunton's Oracle.

From **Saturday** May the 13th, to **Tuesday** May the 16th, 1710.

*The Surprizing-Post; being a Divine Improvement of the Narrative of sudden Deaths, inserted in the last Oracle.*

R E A D E R,

**I** Fear you and I have squander'd away too many Years already, in Pursuit of Trifles and Vanity, 'tis therefore high Time now to save the rest, and to make the best of the Remnant of our Life, because we know not how short it is. It was a wise Caution of *Eleazer*, a *Jew*, who being demanded, when it would be Time to repent and amend; answer'd, *One Day before Death*. And when the other reply'd, That no Man knew the Day of his Death. *Begin then* (said he) *even to Day, for Fear of failing*.

Reader,— Having therefore presented thee with a *Surprizing-Post*, or a *short Narrative of such as have dy'd suddenly*, from *Eutychus*, who fell down dead sleeping at a *Sermon*, down to the *sudden Death of Dr. John Howe*, I shall here (as I promis'd in my last *Oracle*) endeavour to make a *Divine Improvement* of these sudden Deaths, and address it to all such who are in perfect Health, and yet liable to the same Surprize.

There is something very childish and inconsiderate, to say the least of it, of making Account of any, the smallest Portion of Life, otherwise than as lent us of God, to perform his Decrees, which once finish'd, he calls us Home, and reckons with us for the Abuse, or good Use we have made of his Favour and Bounty. If we begin our Race untowardly he may take us suddenly away, and never give us Opportunity to do better; or if we are negligent to the End of our Race, (which must crown all) and slacken our Pace, by wearying our selves in the Ways of Vanity, we have none to thank but our selves, if we are snatch'd away in the Midst of our Folly, before ever we reflect on our Mistake. There's no going beyond the Period set to our Lives, let our Interest make it never so necessary. What now can be more astonishing than to see wise and thinking Persons employ their Thoughts so totally for this World, that if one were to calculate their Lives by the Projects they have laid, there's none could hope to out-live 'em: But let such have a Care, for nothing will augment their Sorrow and Misery, at their last Hour, like the Taber-

nacles they have built on this Side Heaven, saying, *'tis good being here*.

Then, Reader, let me persuade thee to make a divine Improvement of those sudden Deaths related in my last *Oracle*; for tho' thou art now in perfect Health, thou art liable to the same Surprize that others have underwent, and perhaps mayst be the next Instance of sudden Death: Or if thou shouldst have some short Warning of thy Death, by Sickness, (which is very uncertain whether thou hast or not) yet remember, nothing can be added to the Surprize and Horror of those that on a Death-bed are found in perfect Love and Union with the World. Let not such flatter themselves with the Hopes of making any Change in a dying Hour. All that looks like Repentance and a Change then, is but the Effect of Self-love, which has deluded 'em all their Life-time, and forsakes 'em not living or dying. To depend therefore upon some little Warnings of their Deaths is preposterous, there are Ways of being deluded to the last Moment. 'Tis an uncommon Miracle that Death-bed-repenters must depend on for their Salvation at last; and who can assure 'em they shall then be more dispos'd to undeceive themselves, than they were in the Time of their Health? The Mischief of sudden Death is inevitable to all but those that prepare for it. Such are the only Persons can make any Benefit of a little Time before Death, tho' their Salvation depends not on what they shall then do; only they may do God the more Glory, and leave a better Memory behind 'em: Yet I have seen many good People die without any Warning, (you have many Instances of it in my *Narrative of sudden Deaths*) and am perswaded God dispos'd it so in great Mercy, to spare the Weakness either of them, or their Friends and Relations.

There be also in this Narrative many Instances of wicked Men that have dy'd suddenly; which is a fair Warning to all (both good and bad) that have Estates to leave, not to neglect making their Wills; for if they should be surpriz'd with *sudden Death*, (as others have been) they have no Time to make it all: Or, if they should have a little Time allow'd 'em on a Death-bed, to set their Houses in Order, the Business of making one's Will must needs be very uneasy to any one that had not before laid the Scheme of it, when the Strength of their Understanding was at the Height, to guide their Judgment with Reason and Equity, which at that Hour loses its Taste to the Things of this World, that 'tis a Martyrdom to think or speak of 'em; and I verily think,



were I to dispose of my Worldly Goods at that Hour, I should have such a Contempt for 'em, I should give 'em to all the wicked People I could think on, as fittest for them, who understand no other Enjoyments.

Then what a Hazard do they run, that venture Eternity upon their last Breath! And as no Man knows but he may die suddenly, (doubtless Dr. *Howe*, being a healthful Man, as little expected it as any of us) what a woful Condition is he in, that lives in a known Sin! For the Judge of the Earth keepeth his petty Sessions; now letting the Law pass upon some few, reserving the rest 'till the great Assizes, 1 Tim. 5. 24. Some flagitious Persons he punisheth here, lest his Providence should be call'd in Question. Very remarkable was God's Hand upon Mrs. *Hutchinson*, (that *Jezebel* of *New-England*) and her Family, all snatch'd suddenly away; some stabb'd, and others burnt by the *Indians*. One of her Disciples falling into a Lye, God smote him in the very Act, that he sunk down into a deep Swoon; and being by hot Waters recover'd, and coming to himself, he said, *Oh God! thou mightst have struck me dead, as Ananias and Saphira, for I have maintain'd a Lye.*— 'Tis true, Dr. *Howe*, and most of those mention'd in my Narrative of sudden Deaths, had a good Character; and if they were fit for Death, they had a Happiness in having such a quick Passage to Heaven: But, generally speaking, sudden Death is a Judgment; and therefore 'tis Part of our Letany, *From sudden Death, good Lord, deliver us.*

When the Man in the Gospel was laying up Goods for many Years, 'twas said, *Thou Fool! this Night thy Soul shall be requir'd of thee.* His Glass was run, when he thought it to be new turn'd; he was snatch'd away before he was aware; like as one that walking in a Field cover'd with Snow, falleth into a Pit suddenly: And this may be any Man's Case. 'Twas lately Dr. *Lestey's*, Dr. *Howe's*, Mr. *Bailey's*, Mr. *Lob's*, Mr. *West's*, Mrs. *Fuller's*; (who were all well and dead the same Moment) and who can warrant he shan't be surpriz'd in the same Manner? This made St. *Austin* say, *He would not for the Gain of a World be an Atheist for one Half Hour; because he knew not but God might in that Time call him.* 'Tis said of the wicked, *That in a Moment they go down to the Grave.* Their merry Dance ends in a sudden and miserable Downfall. Thus that rich Man died and was buried, and in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Torment. 'Tis true, all wicked Persons don't die a sudden Death, for some (by their many Excesses) die Piece-meal, by a complicated Disease, and a lingering Death: And for this Reason, *Dionysius* the Tyrant is said to have envy'd a Beast, whose Throat he saw cut, because he dy'd so soon. *Julius Caesar* (being not able to bear Pain) wish'd that he might die suddenly: And *Pliny* commendeth sudden Death, as the chief Felicity of Life. But certainly these Men are in a great Error; for when we come to die, we should have nothing to do but to die; but they generally have more to do, that are snatch'd out of the World.

Then let this Narrative of the sudden Death of others, put us presently upon setting our House in Order; for tho' that's a good Death to Nature, which is neither fear'd nor expected, yet that is the best Death which hath been longest expected and prepar'd for; 'tis only to such that sudden Death can be no Surprise.

This should put us all upon a speedy Repentance, that so we might not be surpriz'd, like Dr. *Howe*; and as some Hundreds have been of late.

To prevent this Surprise, consider, *Every Step thou makest in Sin, brings thee in greater Danger*: Repentance may be deny'd, or come too late; nor ought any Man to expect, that when he hath yielded himself up to the Power of his Lusts, it may not end in sudden Death.—— I wish every wicked Man would seriously consider this; for thou dying suddenly, and in thy natural Estate, art certainly damn'd, and, for any thing thou knowest, thou mayst die the next Moment. Death is certain, but how, when, or where, thou knowest not. *Calvin* saith, *A Man may die a Thousand Ways in one Hour.* Some Physicians say there are 300 Diseases in the Body, all mortal; besides, new Sins have begotten new Diseases: Or thou mayst die suddenly by an Imposthume; thy House may be fir'd, and thou consum'd by it; thy Horse may stumble, and so destroy thee; a Tile may fall as thou art walking, and so kill thee; an Adder under the Grass, or Herbs, may sting thee: The Sun is gone out early this Morning to score thee out the Lodging of a Tomb, and thou canst not promise to see the Sun again, when it's once set, tho' now thou be in perfect Strength. Or if thou 'scapest all these Ways of dying suddenly, yet Nature it self will end thee at length.

Reader, I would further shew thee how many Ways thou mayst die suddenly, but that I have said enough already to excite thee to prepare for a sudden Death, and to make thee improve all those surprizing Providences that occur Weekly of that Nature.

### The Casuistical-Post, or Athenian Mercury.

Quest. Mr. Dunton, finding you are under Engagement to re-answer the Questions which the British Apollo cannot manage, I am encourag'd to make my Application to you, not doubting your Fidelity in performing your Promise. The Authors of Apollo for March 31. tell us that *Selah* comes from *Selah*, exaltavit. They say further, That 'tis no significative Word, and wherever plac'd, shews the Voice is to be rais'd there; that where Metre and Musick are lost, this Word ought to be omitted. Where *Selah* has *Higgaion* join'd to it, there must the Note be sung loudly. I desire your Opinion upon the whole.

Ans. 'Tis exceeding plain, the Authors of that Paper have either no Knowledge of the Hebrew, or have been half asleep when they publish'd this Account of *Selah* and *Higgaion*. To say that *Selah* comes from *Selah*, is absolute Nonsense. 'Tis deriv'd it seems from it self, without so much as the Change of one Vowel. The most charitable Supposition is this, That the Printer, or Corrector, suffer'd it to pass *Selah* for *Salah*. There are some Authors well acquainted with the Hebrew, who would derive *סֶלָה* *Selah*, from the Root *סָלַח* *Salah*. But even all this Charity won't set it to Rights; for admitting the Mistake to be in the Printer, or Corrector, and that the Copy had it *Salah*, yet who told these Authors that the Root *סָלַח* did ever once signify exaltavit, he has exalted, since the Beginning of the World? That Root signifies the quite contrary, *סָלַח* *stravit, prostravit, equiparavit, conculcavit, He threw down, levell'd, laid flat, smother'd, abated, trod under Foot.* If they



they meant *Salab*, and not *Selab*, for the Root, they are wrong in their Translation; but if they writ it *Selab*, 'tis just as wise an Account as the Story gives, that an *Invasion* is an *Invasion*. Those who derive it from *Salab* are for making it a Musical Note, for flattening, abating, or remitting the Voice, not for raising it; so that these Gentlemen are most unhappily out in their Guesses. 'Tis true, *R. D. Kimchi* would have *Selab* signify *Elevation*, but then 'tis deriv'd from the Root *לָבַד* *Salab*, *He exalted*, or *rais'd*, doubting the second Radical. Some would have it to import, that the Mind is to be rais'd to God, when the Voices in Consort go all smoothly off; and if so, whether the Metre and the Musick be lost or no, we have Necessity for an Admonition of that Nature, and consequently this Word ought not to be omitted. The 70 make it signify *Diapalma*, a *Pause*, a *Change of the Voice in singing*, a *Change of the Metre*. The *Chaldee* renders it *for ever*, importing the Perpetuity of what goes before. That *Higgaion* join'd with *Selab* only imports the Loudness of the Voice, may very heartily be deny'd. The learned *Ainsworth*, in his Translation of the 9th Psalm renders it *Meditation Selab*, and very justly; for *חִגְּגִיּוֹן* *Higgaion*, comes from the Root *חָגַג* *He meditated*. *Higgaion Selab* may well import that the deepest Meditation is due to what goes before. Had but these Two hard Words never set their Faces in our *English* Version, 'tis probable the Authors of the *British Apollo* might have secur'd their Credit as to this Particular, but indeed their Acquaintance with the *Hebrew* will have now no Credit left.

*Q. Your Judgment is desir'd of the Answer return'd in the British Apollo, Feb. 17. 1710. to this Question, What is meant by the Law of Grace?*

*Ans.* The Answer in the Paper you refer to is in these Words: *We find no such Phrase in Scripture as the Law of Grace; but of Grace, as oppos'd to the Law, St. Paul in his Epistles makes frequent Mention, by which he means the Two Covenants, the one of which requir'd an unerring Obedience, the other allows of Forgiveness after Trespases, thro' the Merits of Christ, and the Covenant of Grace.* My Opinion is, that this Return to the Question is no Answer at all, but a meer Shuffle. Suppose this Expression, *the Law of Grace*, be not found in Scripture, must it therefore have no Meaning? Or are these Gentlemen only concern'd to give the Meanings of Scriptural Expressions? I am ready to prove, that there is not only a *Law of Grace*, but that there are express Passages in Scripture which can admit of no other tolerable Sense. What other Sense will these Gentlemen put upon the Passage where the Nations are represented *expecting*, or *waiting for the Law of the Messiah*? What Law was that which God promis'd he would put in their Hearts under the Kingdom of the Messiah? Do these Authors imagine the Law of Works was then to obtain? What an inglorious King do they render the *Messiah*, if he has no Law by which he governs and will judge the World? What Sense can they possibly put upon the *Law of Christ*? Is that no Scriptural Expression? Or is Christ's Law a Law of Works? With what Diligence must they distinguish between the *Law of Faith* and the *Law of Grace*? Is not the former a Phrase in Scripture? The Gospel contains all the Essentials of a Law, the Rule of Duty is manifest, or the preceptive Part, the Encouragements in Case of sincere *Comportment*, are exceeding great; and the

Threatnings as dreadful on the other Hand, in Case of total Disconformity. In short, these Gentlemen ought to read and understand their Bibles a little better. They are now under Necessity to make their Application to *Antinomian* Authors, for Assistance upon the Point, and I shall direct 'em to Mr. *Marker* against Dr. *Williams*, and to a late Treatise of Mr. *Richard Taylor*, (formerly Schoolmaster at *Brampton*, upon the Borders of *North Britain*) entitl'd, *The Law of Grace establish'd by the Gospel*. Farther, I am ready to prove, that St. *Paul* opposes the *Law of Grace*, not to that Covenant which requir'd unerring Obedience, and which admitted of no Pardon, but to the *Ceremonial Law*. How accurate is it to say the Covenant of Grace allows of Forgiveness thro' the Merits of the Covenant? Have they chang'd their Idea of the Covenant of Grace, in one and the same Sentence?

*Q. Mr. Dunton, In the Apollo for Jan. 27. 1710. I find the Authors of that Paper asserting, that these are Times in which a young Man cannot safely set up Trade, tho' he have a good Foundation to build upon. A great Number of young Men who think they have such Foundations to build upon as may answer the Business of Life they have been train'd up to, are discourag'd by that Apollo from entering upon Business, and desire your free Thoughts upon the Matter, which shall be acknowledg'd as a singular Instance of Friendship.*— Yours, R. C. T. F. D. L. O. M. T. Q. R. S. T. F. M. B. R. P. D. W. T. W. G. L. O. R. D. B. R. N.

*A.* Unless the Authors of the *British Apollo* expect a High-Church Revolution, and the Pretender upon the Throne of *Great Britain*, there is no Reason why they should discourage young Men from entering upon Business. Shall the ungrateful Outcries of the discontented keep Men from Trading, the next Step would be for Men in Business to lay down; and what an effectual Measure would this be to accomplish the Hopes of our Enemies, and to sink the present Government, and the Hopes of a Protestant Succession? Had Dr. *Sacheverell* been at their Elbows when they writ, we could not have expected more Mischief from them. They shall hear of this when I have further Leisure, for (as I have Room for it) I shall prove all their Answers to all the valuable Questions they have yet publish'd false and erroneous, and give Five Hundred Instances of their gross Ignorance: And seeing *Smith*, after t—ing his Printer, continues to interlope with my *Question-Project*, I shall further prove that Project was entirely my own, in *Smith's*, or the *Slandering-Post*, which shall be follow'd with an Action of Four Thousand Pound, upon a certain Printer and Bookseller, except a speedy and voluntary Satisfaction be made me in the *British Apollo*, for the Wrong done me by *Smith* in several of those dull, scandalous, and erroneous Papers; for my Resolutions are, tho' they have done me so many base and notorious Wrongs, not to give 'em one *Billingsgate* Word, but shall disprove every Word they have said to my Prejudice, in *Dunton's Oracle*, and in *Westminster-hall*.

*Q. Why did not God offer to Hezekiah to cause the Sun to stand still, as he did by Joshua, but to make it run extraordinarily?*

*A.* God hath often wrought Miracles in several Creatures of the same Kind: As for Example; He hath rais'd many from the dead, cur'd many of the *Leprosy*, &c. but as to the Motion of the Celestial Bodies, he was never pleas'd to shew but Two Miracles, one by stopping, and another Time by changing their Motion; doubt—



doubtless, that the general Order of the World, which dependeth on that of the Heavens, should not be often interrupted.

Now in this Rarity, there being but these Two Miracles, God hath been pleas'd to shew the Abundance of his Power by the Diversity of it; therefore he hath not reiterated the first Miracle, but was pleas'd that the second should totally differ, yea should be contrary to the former.

### Dunton's Advertisement to all his ingenious Querists.

**T**Hat Dunton's Oracle may in Time be made a universal Directory for any that labour under any Scruples whatever, I shall (with the Assistance I am promis'd) not only answer all nice and curious Questions in Divinity, History, Philosophy, Love, Poetry, &c. but shall also insert several choice and uncommon Cases that were lately (and may hereafter be) sent to me: And that I may carry on my Athenian Project in such a refin'd Manner as may gratify the curious, but more especially my ingenious Querists, I desire all my Querists to keep the following Order, as to the Subject Matter of those Questions they shall hereafter send to Dunton's Oracle; Viz.

I. That they send no Questions that have already been answer'd in my old Athenian Oracles, for no such shall be answer'd here.

II. That they send no obscene Questions, for I shall answer none that have any Tendency that Way.

III. That they send no Riddles, or Equivocations, for they are of no Use to the Publick.

IV. That they send nothing, the Answer of which may be a Scandal to the Government, or an Abuse to particular Persons.

V. That no Querist send above One, or Two Questions at the most, at one Time, for then they will be sooner at Liberty to send again, and perhaps something more curious than what they sent at first.

VI. and Lastly, That they send nothing that may be destructive to the Principles of Virtue and sound Knowledge, and then let my Querists be as nice and curious as they please.

And if any Gentleman (as the labouring Oar lies all upon John Dunton) will so far contribute towards the completing my Question-Project, as to send me what rare Questions or Cases he has met with, (either in Print or Manuscript) provided he sends nothing but what is nice and curious, (for no common Question shall be inserted in Dunton's Oracle) I shan't fail to insert it in this Paper, and be always ready to own the Obligation: And that none of my Querists may be put to the double Charge of buying the same Questions twice, I shall not only answer whatever nice and curious Questions are sent to me, but shall re-answer (in the same Manner I have done in this Oracle, and in Numb. 3.) all those valuable Questions that have yet been answer'd by the Interloper, or British Apollo; and when I meet with any Questions that require immediate Satisfaction, (if sent to Mr. Darrack in Peterborough-Court in Little-Britain) they shall never fail of an Answer in my next Oracle.

I have further to assure my ingenious Querists, that I shan't insert one Syllable of the old Questions (Printed for Mr. Bell) in Dunton's Oracle; or if at any Time (thro' Forgetfulness, or Oversight) such a Blunder should happen, I'll be so far from injuring the Bookseller that purchas'd my old Oracles, that I'll give publick Notice of it my self: Which I desire Mr. Mayo, the Printer of the British Apollo, to consider, that he may the better see what Wrong I receive by his interloping with my Question-Project.

I shall only add, The Project of my 3000 Posts, but more especially my Athenian Mercury, has already met with such a kind Reception, that 21 Numbers are already printed of the First Volume, and when completed in 30 Numbers, an entire Volume (besides the Weekly Papers) shall be publish'd all together, the Twelve Numbers that were formerly promis'd being too little to contain that great Variety of diverting Posts and curious Questions that were lately sent to Dunton's Oracle from Oxford, Norwich, Bristol, York, Dublin, and several other Places.

JOHN DUNTON.

Three Books newly publish'd, viz.

1. **A** Thenianism, or the New Projects of Mr. J. Dunton Author of the Essay entitl'd, The Hazard of a Death-Bed-Repentance, being Six Hundred distinct Treatises (in Prose and Verse) written with his own Hand, and is an entire Collection of all his Writings, both in Manuscript and such as were formerly printed: To which is added Dunton's Farewel to Printing, in some serious Thoughts on those Words of Solomon, Of making many Books there is no End, and much Study is a Weariness of the Flesh. Vol. I. with the Author's Effigies, to distinguish the original and true Copies from such as are false and imperfect. Take Care also of being cheated by Wooden Cuts, the right is that which is drawn and grav'd by those Two celebrated Artists Mr. Knight and Mr. Vander Gucht. To this Work is prefix'd an Heroick Poem upon Dunton's Projects, written by the Athenian Society, with an Alphabetical Table of the several Projects, Questions, Novelties, Poems and Characters inserted in this Volume. Price Bound 6 s.

2. The Bull-baiting, or Sach—ll dress'd up in Fireworks, lately brought over from the Bear-Garden in Southwark, and expos'd for the Diversion of the Citizens of London, at Six pence a-piece. By John Dunton, Author of the Answer to Dr. K—net, entitl'd The Hazard of a Death-Bed-Repentance; being Remarks on a scandalous Sermon bellow'd out at St. Paul's on the Fifth of November last, before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, by Dr. Sach—ll. Dedicated to the Right Honourable Sir Samuel Garrard, Bar. Lord-Mayor of the City of London. Price 6 d.

3. The Christian's Gazette, or News chiefly respecting the Invisible World; being a Pacquet for the pious Virtuosi on Subjects never started before. Written by John Dunton, Author of the Essay entitl'd The Hazard of a Death-Bed-Repentance. Price 1 s.

All three written by John Dunton, Author of this Weekly Paper, and sold by J. Morphew near Stationer's Hall.

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